

REMARKS

The present application was filed on November 26, 2003, with claims 1-20, all of which remain pending. Claims 1, 15 and 20 are the independent claims.

Claims 1, 3-9, 11, 12, 15, 17 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0085560 (hereinafter "Cathey") and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0188198 (hereinafter "Holdsworth").

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cathey, Holdsworth and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0005146 (hereinafter "Miller").

Claims 10, 13, 14, 16, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cathey, Holdsworth and U.S. Patent No. 6,651,096 (hereinafter "Gai").

Although Applicants respectfully maintain that the claims as previously presented were patentable over cited references for at least the reasons identified in the Appeal Brief and Reply Brief previously filed in the present application, Applicants have amended the independent claims without prejudice solely in order to expedite prosecution by clarifying the claimed subject matter. For example, previously presented claim 1 recited that at least one level of the tree representation other than a root level of the tree representation comprises a plurality of nodes, with at least two of the nodes at that level each having a separate matching table associated therewith. Amended claim 1 further specifies that each of the separate matching tables associated with that level comprises one or more entries each specifying a set of one or more values for the field associated with that level, and each of the separate matching tables associated with that level corresponds to a different set of one or more values, for another field, specified by a respective one of a plurality of entries of another matching table associated with another level of the tree representation.

In an illustrative embodiment, described in the specification at, for example, page 11, line 26, to page 13, line 2, with reference to FIG. 3 of the drawings, a tree representation 300 of an access control list includes three levels, denoted Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3, with Level 1 being the root level and Level 3 being the leaf level. Levels 1 and 2 are associated with source address and destination address fields, respectively, of the rules of the access control list. Each of a plurality of nodes associated with Level 2 of the tree representation 300 includes a separate

matching table, with the separate matching tables associated with the respective nodes of Level 2 being denoted 310-1, 310-2, . . . 310-7.

Each of these separate matching tables at Level 2 includes one or more entries each specifying a set of one or more values for the field associated with Level 2, destination address. For example, matching table 310-1 includes entries respectively specifying values for destination address including, for example, 20.20.20.1, 20.20.20.3, and 20.20.20.4. Matching table 310-2 includes entries respectively specifying values for destination address including, for example, 20.20.20.3 and 20.20.20.4.

Moreover, each of these separate matching tables at Level 2 corresponds to a different set of one or more values for another field (source address) specified by a respective one of a plurality of entries of another matching table associated with another level of the tree representation (Level 1). For example, matching table 310-1 corresponds to a value for source address of 10.10.10.1, as specified by the first entry of the matching table associated with Level 1. Matching table 310-2 corresponds to a value for source address of 10.10.10.3, as specified by the second entry of the matching table associated with Level 1.

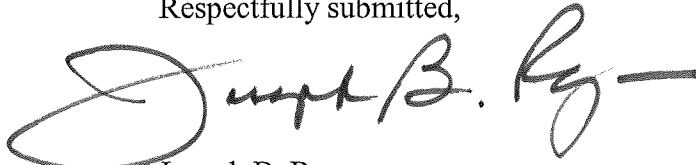
Applicants respectfully assert that the cited references fail to teach or suggest at least the newly-added limitations of claim 1. It is therefore believed that independent claim 1 is not obvious in view of the proposed combination of cited references.

Independent claims 15 and 20 have been amended in a manner similar to that discussed above with reference to claim 1, and are believed allowable for reasons similar to those identified above with regard to independent claim 1.

The dependent claims are believed allowable for at least the reasons identified above with regard to their respective independent claims.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that amended claims 1-20 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request the withdrawal of the §103(a) rejections.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph B. Ryan", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Date: November 22, 2010

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